

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 039836
ORIGIN ARA-10

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O 230018Z FEB 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 039836

CANALNEGS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: U.S. PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: ACTIVITIES REPORT

I.

THIS IS MESSAGE NO. 6 FROM THE DEPARTMENT APPLICABLE TO THE
FEBRUARY 1977 NEGOTIATIONS IN PANAMA, DESPATCHED FROM ARA/
PAN AT 5:30 PM ON FEBRUARY 22.

II. BRIEFING ITEMS

A. MEDIA -- JACK ANDERSON, IN FEB. 19 COLUMN, STATES HUMAN
RIGHTS MAY PROVE OBSTACLE TO SPEEDY PANAMA TREATY AND CITES
CONFIDENTIAL REPORT IN HANDS OF REP. MURPHY THAT ALLEGES
GOP TORTURE AND OTHER VIOLATIONS. SUNDAY STAR (FEB. 20)
PRINTS LONG IMPRESSIONISTIC PIECE BY GRAHAM GREENE REplete
WITH FACTUAL ERRORS AND COLORFUL PROSE. (IN ZONE, HE SAYS,
ONE HAS FEELING JUNGLE HAS BEEN HELD BACK BY BATTALION OF
LAWNMOWERS.) THEME IS THAT CANAL ISSUE APPROACHING POINT
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OF CONFRONTATION, AS IMPATIENCE OF TORRIJOS AND PANAMA-
NIAN PEOPLE GROWS.

B. AT FEB. 22 PRESS BRIEFING SPOKESMAN, RESPONDING TO
QUERIES, SAID THAT TALKS WERE POSITIVE AND BUSINESSLIKE AND
WERE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. HE NOTED THAT COMMUNIQUE

USUALLY ISSUED AT END OF EACH SESSION OF TALKS BUT
REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON WHETHER BUNKER OR LINOWITZ
WOULD BRIEF REPORTERS ON THEIR RETURN.

C. AMERICAN LEGION. GUTHRIE, NADEAU, AND LTC. MERRICK
MET WITH LEGION'S FOREIGN POLICY COMMISSION FOR TWO
HOURS FEB. 22. REPRESENTING ANTI-TREATY SIDE WERE
DRUMMOND, WHO DID MOST OF TALKING, AND HARMON. THEIR
REMARKS CONCENTRATED ON COMMUNISM, LONG-RANGE DURABILITY
OF A NEW TREATY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ALLEGED PRESSURES
BY AMERICAN BANKS EAGER TO PROTECT FINANCIAL INTERESTS
IN PANAMA. AUDIENCE SEEMED UNSYMPATHETIC TO ARGUMENTS
FOR NEW TREATY BUT WAS NOT HOSTILE.

D. DRUMMOND SUIT. AFFIDAVIT WAS SIGNED AND DELIVERED
TO JUSTICE DEPARTMENT THIS NOON. JUSTICE HAS SERVED
ITS ANSWER ON OPPOSING COUNSEL AND WILL FILE ITS BRIEF
IN THE MORNING. THE HEARING IS SCHEDULED FOR FEB.
28TH.

E. SECRETARY'S OFFICE REQUESTED AND PAN HAS PREPARED
SPECIAL BRIEFING MEMO FOR HIS FEB. 23 APPEARANCE BEFORE
SLACK APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE. MEMO GIVES HIGH-
LIGHTS OF CODEL SLACK VISIT TO PANAMA, INCLUDING
AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE, AND SUPPLIES Q'S AND A'S
FOR USE IF ASKED.

ACTION ITEM

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A. THE SECRETARY WILL APPEAR ON FACE THE NACION
THIS SUNCAY. S/PRS HAS INSTRUCTED US TO SUBMIT Q'S
AND A'S BY NOON, FEB. 24. FOLLOWING IS AN ILLUSTRATIVE
QUESTION: BEGIN QUOTE MR. SECRETARY, THE LATEST ROUND
OF TALKS WITH PANAMA ON A NEW CANAL TREATY HAS JUST
CONCLUDED. HOW DID THEY GO? ARE WE NEARER NOW TO AN
AGREEMENT WITH PANAMA? END QUOTE.

WE WILL NEED TO PROVIDE AN ANSWER BY THURSDAY .
WE WOULD APPRECIATE UP DATE.

VANCE

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Message Attributes

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